

State of New Jersey  
Department of Human Services  
Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

# *The Insider*

Educational Services Newsletter

Volume 1 • Issue 1

Fall 2003

James M. Davy, Commissioner

Terri C. Wilson, Deputy Commissioner

Vito, J. DeSantis, Executive Director

## *FROM THE DESK OF:*

## *AMELIA RICCIARDI, COORDINATOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS*

Welcome to “The Insider,” which was conceptualized by the Educational Services Staff of CBVI’s Central Regional Office (CRO) located in Toms River. This first issue contains articles that represent their views and provides useful information for all parents of visually impaired children. Future issues will include articles from other CBVI staff, educational and developmental professionals.

Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. I joined the Commission’s staff as the Coordinator of Educational Services in March 2004. I have been employed by the New Jersey State Department of Human Services since the fall of 1984, when I joined the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). I held a variety of posi-

tions, most recently serving as Director of Family Support Services, Northern Region.

I’ve also worked as a teacher, case manager, supervisor, and county administrator. Prior to DDD, I taught special education as a teacher in both the public and private sectors. Since 1975, I’ve been extensively involved as a volunteer at Camp Fatima of N. J., serving in many capacities including recently as director of its adult weekend program.

My educational background includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with endorsements in Special Education and Nursery School Education from Seton Hall University; a Master of Arts degree from Montclair State University in Communication Sciences/Learning Disabilities,

and I have completed post-graduate work in Administration and Supervision at Kean University. I am also a Licensed Social Worker.

It is our plan to provide the highest quality services possible to our students. I feel extremely honored to now be working with an outstanding group of teachers here at CBVI. It is my belief that the immeasurable dedication and commitment of these professionals, combined with your interest and participation in your child’s education and development is a partnership that will enable your child to achieve success.

Have a great school year!

# What If My Child Can't Read Regular Print?

By Ronnie Staffenberg



Many of our students receive services from the Commission (CBVI), the NJ Library for the Blind and Handicapped and/or Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D). There is often confusion about which organization performs what services. All of these agencies need time to fill requests; it is imperative that as much "lead time" be given as possible, to ensure that your child has his/her texts and leisure reading within the same timeframe as his/her classmates. Please keep this information for future reference.

**T**he teacher who works with your child will be assessing your child's functional vision and the most effective medium for your child to use for reading.

CBVI will produce large print texts for your child if it is determined that large print is appropriate. The local school must provide a copy of the text. It is then sent to our George F. Meyer Instructional Resource Center in Newark. The binding is cut off of the cover. Each page will then lie flat in a copier that produces enlargements. The enlarged pages are bound with spiral bindings. One textbook may turn out to be more than one volume.

It is usually recommended that by the time a student reaches middle school or high school books other than math or science be obtained on tape if the student can use them. The size of these huge large print books often make it difficult (and slow) for your child to read efficiently.

CBVI provides Braille textbooks for those students who are Braille-readers. CBVI teachers request Braille books from the Meyer Center. The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) maintains a database of all texts that have been transcribed by any agency in the country. This prevents duplication of effort. The staff of the Meyer Center will purchase your child's Braille text, if it is available, or one of New Jersey's certified Braille transcribers (all volunteers) will transcribe your child's book.

Some students use Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) to read highly-magnified print. These machines are loaned to the student, one each for home and school use.

No matter what type of books your child reads (print, large print, tape, CCTV, and/or Braille) these texts should enable your child to master the curriculum being taught in his/her classroom.

# NJ Library for the Blind and Print-Handicapped

**2300 Stuyvesant Ave., P.O. Box 501, Trenton, NJ 08625-0501**

**Hours: 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday**

**9:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Saturday.**

**(The Library is closed Saturdays in July and August.)**

**Toll Free: 800-792-8322**

**Toll Free TDD: 877-882-5593**

**Phone: 609-530-4000 Fax: 609-530-6384**

**e-mail: [njlhb@njstatelib.org](mailto:njlhb@njstatelib.org) Web site: [www.state.nj.us/statelibrary/njlhb](http://www.state.nj.us/statelibrary/njlhb)**



The U.S. Library of Congress includes a Library for the Blind and Print Handicapped in each state. These libraries provide books in Braille, large print, and on tape to anyone registered with them. Anyone with a diagnosed "print disability" is eligible to apply to the library for this FREE service. This includes adults and children with visual impairments and/or any other condition that makes it impossible to read print, such as dyslexia or the inability to hold a book.

The collection includes novels, literature, and books for reports and recreational reading. Also available are magazines in special formats, and picture books with plastic Braille pages inserted (print/Braille books). There is no limit for the number of books that may be borrowed at any time, but, the library would appreciate the quick return of any unused book. There is usually only one copy of each title in Braille, so the efficient return of these books is especially necessary.

All reading materials are loaned to the consumer and must be returned via  
FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND

through the U.S. Postal Service. All tapes are produced on cassettes with four tracks and a special tape player is necessary to play them. This player can also be borrowed from the library, free of charge.

You may choose to have the librarian select books for your child according to his/her interests identified on the application or you may call the library directly to order specific titles or request assistance in locating a book on a given topic. Twice a year the library publishes Rapsheet, a newsletter for children and young adult readers, with articles of interest to parents and teachers.

It is important for parents of student borrowers to contact the library at least once a year and at that time any change in the child's reading level, school address, home address, or the child's interest categories, should be reported.

**RECORDING OR THE BLIND & DYSLEXIC**  
**20 ROSZEL RD., PRINCETON, NJ 08540**  
**PHONE: 800-221-4792**  
**WEB SITE: WWW.RFBD.ORG**



**R**ecording for the Blind and Dyslexic is an organization that serves people who cannot read standard print because of a visual, perceptual or other physical disability. Academic and professional textbooks are available on audio-tape from elementary through post-graduate. They also offer the non-profit sale of dictionaries, reference materials, other technical books on computer disk (E-Text) and specially adapted tape players and recorders to use with audio-books.

There is an initial registration fee of \$50 and an annual \$25 renewal fee. The Commission will pay the fees for our students. Specific titles must be ordered for each student. If the title your child needs is NOT already recorded, the school must provide two copies of the book. When it is recorded, one copy is used by the narrator, and the other by a proof-reader in the studio.

---

## *From School to Community: Transition Services*

By Gloria Rodzielowicz



**T**he Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) is a federal law which mandates that all students be referred to the CBVI Transition Unit at the age of 14. From this point on, your child will have the services of their Commission Teacher as well as a Transition Counselor.

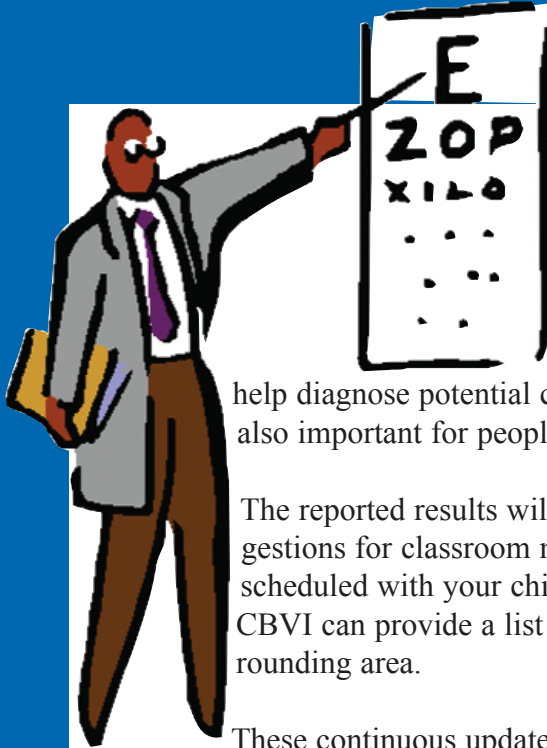
The CBVI Transitional Program is designed to provide "student centered" services that focus on the strengths and abilities of each young person. Transition from secondary school is the beginning point of a journey. The accomplishments made during the process depends heavily on communication and cooperation between

students, parents, and professionals. This collaboration will be the basis for establishing the support system that every student needs to succeed.

The Transition Counselor will be making visits to your child's school. As he/she progresses through the school system the Counselor will be in contact with the parent or legal guardian. The successful transition of each student requires choosing a goal early on in the process. Changes can be implemented since the plan will be reviewed each year.

# *Essential Data to Help Us Help Your Child!*

Eye Exams By Amy Freeman



At CBVI an eye examination is required at least once every 3 years for several reasons. First, and most importantly, to maintain your child's eye health. Children frequently do not verbalize problems with their vision. Eye exams help diagnose potential concerns before serious complications occur. These exams are also important for people with no vision.

The reported results will help your child's teacher provide the most appropriate suggestions for classroom modifications best suited for your child. This exam can be scheduled with your child's optometrist or ophthalmologist. If you do not have one, CBVI can provide a list of several eye care professionals with practices in your surrounding area.

These continuous updates allow us to continue to provide services for your child. If an evaluation is not obtained, CBVI services will be discontinued. Please be assured that we join you in wanting what is best for your child.

## *Functional Vision Assessments*

*by Gloria Rodzielowicz*

With the beginning of a new school year, your CBVI Teacher is responsible for conducting a Functional Vision Assessment of your child that provides a better understanding of how your child "sees" in his/her classroom environment. This assessment can provide suggestions to the classroom teacher, aides (when appropriate) and the Child Study Team as to how best to maximize your child's vision in school.

The assessments should be completed by mid-January. Please watch your mailbox for your copy. If you have not received it by the end of January, contact your child's CBVI Teacher.





# Contacting Your CBVI Teacher/Education Consultant

By Sharon Wnorowski



**E**arly in September you will receive a letter of introduction from the CBVI Teacher who will be working with your child this year. This letter will include contact information: Name; telephone number; fax number; e-mail address; and mailing address.



You can contact your child's CBVI teacher through their direct telephone line, through the Education Supervisor, or by calling the CBVI offices main phone number and asking to be transferred to the proper extension. If you forget your assigned CBVI Teacher's name, we will have to verify your identity before giving out pertinent information. This is necessary to address both privacy and safety concerns.



CBVI Teachers are assigned one office day per week. Although each teacher checks their voicemail on a regular basis, he/she may not be able to return your call until his/her office day. When using voicemail, please leave a clear message with instructions on how to contact you. All CBVI staff have e-mail addresses, however, teacher's can only access their e-mail on office days. It is recommended that you not use e-mail to leave messages that require a quick response.



**Your Teacher's E-mail address:**  
**Firstname.Lastname@dhs.state.nj.us**

# *CBVI Teacher/Education Consultants*

## **NORTHERN REGION**

153 Halsey St. 5th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102

**Main Number: 973-648-2111**

Educ. Supervisor: Solange Curry;

973-648-2412;

[Solange.Curry@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:Solange.Curry@dhs.state.nj.us)

## **CENTRAL REGION**

1510 Hooper Ave., Suite 240, Toms River, NJ 08721

**Main Number: 732-255-0720**

Educ. Supervisor: Michael Colucci, Ed.D.;

732-255-0903;

[Michael.Colucci@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:Michael.Colucci@dhs.state.nj.us)

## **SOUTHERN REGION**

101 Haddon Ave., Camden, NJ 08103

**Main Number: 856-614-3000**

Educ. Supervisor: John Cassidy, Ed.D.;

856-614-3016;

[John.Cassidy@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:John.Cassidy@dhs.state.nj.us)

## **STATEWIDE SERVICES**

153 Halsey St. 5th Flr., Newark, NJ 07102

**Main Number: 973-648-7897**

Educ. Supervisor: Cynthia Madric;

973-648- 3476;

[Cynthia.Madric@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:Cynthia.Madric@dhs.state.nj.us)

**TOLL FREE NUMBER - (FOR LEAVING MESSAGES ONLY) - 77-685-8878**

**Note From CBVI: Welcome to “The Insider,” our first educational services newsletter.**

**We would like to thank CRO Instructors Sharon Wnorowski, Gloria Rodzielowicz, Educ. Supervisor and Michael Colucci, Ed.D. for spearheading this effort.**

**This issue is dedicated to Teacher Ronnie Staffenberg (formerly Boorstein), who recently retired after 25+ years of service with the State of New Jersey and was also instrumental in producing this publication.**



**CBVI Is On The Web!**

**Check It Out**

**[www.cbvi.nj.gov](http://www.cbvi.nj.gov)**

**Suggested topics may be forwarded to:**

**[Sharon.Wnorowski@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:Sharon.Wnorowski@dhs.state.nj.us)**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TRENTON NJ  
PERMIT NO. 21

New Jersey Commission for the  
Blind & Visually Impaired  
153 Halsey Street  
Newark, NJ 07102